

# Arkansas Insurance Department

Asa Hutchinson  
Governor



Allen Kerr  
Commissioner

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Chief Deputy Commissioner Lenita Blasingame Retiring *Russ Galbraith Named as Replacement***

LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS (March 3, 2015) — Insurance Commissioner Allen Kerr announced today that long-time insurance employee, Chief Deputy Commissioner Lenita Blasingame, has decided to retire at the end of June after nearly fifty years with the Arkansas Insurance Department. He has named Russ Galbraith as her replacement.

“I really hate to see Lenita go, but she deserves this time in her life to engage in personal pursuits,” said Kerr. “I am extremely grateful she agreed to stay during my first six months to help me learn the ropes. I am the fourteenth Commissioner she has taken under her wing to mentor.”

Blasingame served as an intern at the Department in 1963 and 1964, becoming a full-time employee in 1965. She began her career as a secretary to the Commissioner and worked her way up through the ranks to her current position as Chief Deputy. Blasingame served as Insurance Commissioner during the transition between Julie Benafield and Jay Bradford in 2009.

“I have so enjoyed my years at the Department and witnessing the growth in the insurance industry and the growth of professionalism among the agent community,” said Blasingame. “One of my proudest accomplishments has been the continuing education requirement Arkansas has put in place in order for agents to maintain their licenses.”

(more)

In naming Galbraith as Blasingame's replacement, Kerr said, "I know Russ will show the same sort of commitment to the regulation of the insurance industry that Lenita has demonstrated all these years." "He is a good fit for this very important position."

Galbraith has served as a senior government and industry affairs manager for Farmers Insurance for the last seventeen years, serving as the primary legislative and regulatory liaison for the company not only Arkansas, but also Mississippi and Louisiana. He previously served as President of the Arkansas Adjusters Association and has sat on numerous boards including the Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana Automobile Insurance Plans, the Governor's Earthquake Task Force, the Arkansas Disaster Coalition, the Arkansas Rural Risk Underwriting Association, and the Arkansas Insurance Industry Coalition.

Galbraith earned a master's degree in public administration from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and a bachelor's degree in political science from Lyon College.

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